INDIGENOUS RESEARCH IN SOCIAL WORK: THE CHALLENGE OF OPERATIONALIZING WORLDVIEW

Raven Pelletier Sinclair

INTRODUCTION

This paper arises out of a research project that was designed to gather information about how Indigenous researchers incorporate their worldview beliefs, practices, and protocols with western research methodologies and methods. The focus of this paper is to describe the challenges I experienced as I embarked upon a 'western' research project while trying to incorporate my nascent understanding of Indigenous worldview.

The research project was designed to identify the specific descriptions and explications of how indigenous scholars have reconciled worldview issues and integrated these unique ways of perceiving the world within their research methodologies. As a Ph.D. student cognizant of the western standards required in dissertation research, I wanted to find a way to honour my Indigenous roots, and my "Indigenist" ideological stance. An Indigenist stance, according to Churchill (1996), means that one actively strives to hold the rights of Indigenous people as his or her primary political goal, while incorporating his or her traditions in their work. Hence, the need to incorporate Indigenous practices and protocols into a western qualitative research paradigm was the premise upon which the project was designed. The challenges were evident in considering the design of the research, in attempts to weave ceremony and protocol into the various phases of the project, and in considering how to record these elements into the final report. The preliminary findings verified the challenges I faced.

LITERATURE

In the last two decades, Indigenous scholars have become vocal in commenting on the continued researching of Indigenous people and Indigenous issues by governments, educational institutions, and other agencies. These scholars have made recommendations for making research more relevant and applicable to Indigenous people (Gilchrist, 1997; Barden and Boyer, 1993; Deloria, 1991). These critiques have been a catalyst for change in the research milieu. Research was something that was imposed upon native people, but this has changed to being something that is designed by and implemented for native people (Sinclair, 2003). The change is in response to a research history that has been harmful to Native people in many ways, including the intrusiveness and over-researching of Native people, the dissemination of incorrect information, the questionable purposes of research, and questions of the ethics applied in research findings.

Historically, Indigenous people have perceived research as an intrusive endeavour carried out by Western researchers who, consequently, were viewed as intruders and predators (Wax, 1991; Trimble, 1977; Maynard, 1974). Much of indigenous culture and history, recounted by researchers and anthropologists, is a history of Native-White contact and non-Native perceptions of Native people and culture (Peacock, 1996).

Most research about Indigenous people has been implemented from a Western research paradigm with little Indigenous input in study design, implementation, or analysis. It has led to results that are not useful to indigenous communities (Trimble and Medicine, 1976). It appears that researchers have been the primary beneficiaries of research on indigenous people, while bearing little responsibility for the way that findings were used (Swisher, 1993; Deloria, Jr., 1991; Wax, 1991). Indeed, a great deal of research about Indigenous people has taken a perspective of deficiency whereby only debilitating social issues have been the focus of inquiry. From this perspective, the people and their way of life are pathologized (Sue and Sue, 1990; Peacock, 1996; Poupart, Martinez, Red Horse, and Scharnberg, 2000; Sinclair, 2003). Perhaps the most serious consequence of these skewed

representations is that this information is disseminated widely and is taken for truth. Poupart et al (2000) claim that, "A combination of inaccurate research, inadequate education, slanted media coverage, and dehumanizing stereotypes make even the most 'educated' professional grossly uninformed about American Indian life and culture" (Poupart, Martinez, Red Horse, and Scharnberg, 2000:15).

Beginning in the 1970s, bands and tribes began to actively resist research and some prohibited research without council consent (Trimble, 1977; ICPB, n.d). Passive resistance has long taken the form of providing fictitious or deliberately incorrect information to researchers (Trimble, 1977; Stoller and Oakes, 1987; Peacock, 1996; Sinclair, 2003). Active resistance has led to a movement towards favouring "insider" research where the researcher is a member of the researched group (Swisher, 1993), and a movement towards research that meets several criteria: Native involvement, usefulness to the community, and cultural relevance (Peacock, 1996; Deloria, Jr. 1991; Barden and Boyer, 1993). Michell (1999) describes these as necessary elements for academic freedom of Indigenous scholars. To engage in research with Native communities in any other way is to perpetuate the "colonizing propensities"[1] of the last century of research, which would resemble the history of research where Native people are the passive recipients of research activities. The findings are not validated or ratified by the people, and the data is used without their consideration or consent for purposes that not only do not benefit the people, but also may lead to greater harm (Sinclair, 2003).

In academic circles, we see support for the complaints about research on Native people reflected in contemporary research theory. Research is moving towards inclusivity of "voice," worldview, and culture, and is taking a serious look at issues of representation, the "other," and other "ways of knowing" in research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2002). Academic institutions are initiating the development of some outstanding guidelines to ensure adherence to cultural protocols in the application of Western research paradigms to Indigenous populations (Kowalski, Thurston, Verhoef and Rutherford., 1996; U Vic, 2001; Henderson, Simmons, Bourke and Muir., 2002). It is becoming less politic to barge onto First Nations, notebook in hand, operating under the assumption that Indigenous people are prime subjects for any given research project.

On the heels of this new movement, Indigenous scholars are taking advantage of the opportunity to explore the theoretical intersections of Indigenous ontology and epistemology with research methodologies in an attempt to create research that is useful for the people and respects Indigenous ways of knowing in research (Smith, 2000; Peacock, 1996; Michell, 1999; Martin, n.d.). The value of this approach towards research is articulately outlined in *Decolonizing Methodologies* (Smith, 1999) as research that challenges the hegemony of Western research through a grassroots approach that comes from the community and empowers the community. This new body of research literature often contains words of advice for culturally-relevant research (Trimble, 1977; Deloria, Jr., 1991; Peacock, 1993). For example, Red Horse (1993) believes "It is important to be grounded in American Indian knowledge, attitudes and beliefs" (p. 19). Barden and Boyer (1993) outline several criteria to which Indigenous researchers ought to adhere.

The intricacies and specifics of practically integrating and applying the practices and protocols of an Indigenous worldview with western research methodologies have yet to be synthesized into clearly articulated formats. We can surmise through the outstanding and creative work of Graveline (2000), that the circle as a methodology is effective, honours Indigenous ontology, and can be adapted to data gathering. We can comprehend, through the work of Nabigon, Hagey, Webster and MacKay (1999), the concept of 'trickster' as one aspect of worldview that will come into play in research endeavours. They explain how we can honour that the element of healing will occur when we use the circle as a methodology -- a significant and vital aspect of coming together for the purpose of research in postcolonial environment. Colorado, in a pioneering work (1988), explains that, from an Indigenous perspective, Indian 'science' or Indigenous epistemology accounts for both theory and method in knowledge gathering (research). These authors cleverly articulate, on a primarily theoretical level, the challenge of juxtaposing Indigenous cultural values and traditions with western research methodology and western ways of approaching knowledge gathering, taking these articulations to the method level required of a project designed to elicit the explicit ways and means that scholars have used to honour their worldviews and their academic standards.

INDIGENOUS METHODOLOGY DESIGN AND CHALLENGES

The challenges of incorporating Indigenous worldview practices and protocols with western research were several. There are no guidelines telling the researcher when to incorporate ceremony, how and when to present offerings and gifts, how to honour "spirit," or how to include these aspects into the writing piece of the research. The investigator followed intuition and considered her spiritual teachings as she embarked upon each stage of the research. The first step was to participate in ceremony.

Ceremony

Adhering to my *Nehiyaw* teachings, augmented by several written worksI came to understand that research from an Indigenous perspective ought to be viewed as developing a relationship with other human beings premised upon respect (Colorado, 1988; Michell, 1999; Smith, 1999a). The process of taking time out of someone's life, and recording their stories, knowledge, and wisdom for the researcher's benefit, ought to be accorded a certain amount of respect. In addition, if the ancestors were to participate and be present in the interviews, and assist in guiding the project throughout, then a ceremony needed to be undertaken to make these specific requests. The investigator conducted a tobacco offering ceremony and made her requests to spirit.[2]

The preliminary findings of the research support the inclusion of ceremony and protocol, and offer recommendations for how to approach them; namely, that the choices of ceremony and protocol that one uses is a personal decision. "There is no way you can create a standard protocol… every teacher has a different way of teaching and a different kind of expectation of you…"(WW).

All of the participants spoke of engaging in research in the "proper" way. In the context of Indigenous research, "proper" refers to respecting, honouring, and attending to the spiritual and cultural practices and protocols.

So I would look at it from the beginning of the ceremony and pray and say this is why I'm here. I would give my tobacco and my cloth and ask the grandfathers and ask the Kohkums [grandmothers] and the Mosoms [grandfathers] that if this is for me to do, that I do it and I do it properly (YH).

Location

Until recently, "I" has been anathema to the objectivity of the positivist research paradigm. As research moves to including models that stretch the limits of objectivity to honouring the subjectivity inherent in approaches such as feminism and transpersonal research, there exists opportunity to further expand the boundaries of this new acceptance by including the principle of 'location' from an Indigenous perspective. Martin (2002), Smith (1999), and Acoose (2000), among other Indigenous scholars, have reintroduced, in written form, the traditional method of sharing the self with others through identification of kinship and community ties, and the sharing of significant personal experiences and events. This is referred to in the contemporary context as 'locating' oneself in the research or writing. Traditionally, this might be referred to as showing honour and respect to others by sharing who one is with respect to relations and history, thereby claiming one's genealogy and ancestry (Martin, 2001). It means revealing our identity to others; who we are, where we come from, our experiences that have shaped those things, and our intentions for the work we plan to do. Hence, 'location' in Indigenous research, as in life, is a critical starting point. In this project, the challenge became where to put this section in a research report. As a critical starting point, the investigator decided that it ought to go after the abstract and before the literature review. A brief introduction of the concept outlined above provided the prelude.

My location

I am a Nehiyaw iskwew, daughter of Ruth Pelletier of George Gordon's (Kanewonuskatew) First Nation and Raymond Sinclair of Kawacatoose' First Nation, relation to Cyrs, Favels, Brass', Birds, McDonalds, and Pratts of Treaty 4 in what is now southern Saskatchewan. My ways of knowing and being in this world are informed by my transracial adoption

into a white Anglo-Saxon protestant family at the age of five, and my subsequent choice to re-acculturate to my Cree/Assinniboine and Saulteaux roots. My familiarity with viewing my world from a midpoint between these divergent worldview platforms, depending upon the company I keep and the context in which I find myself (perhaps a sweat lodge or a graduate classroom), informs and fuels my desire to articulate bridges; ontological, epistemological, theoretical, and methodological. I rely up on the guidance and wisdom of all my relations to lead me in the right directions and to enable me to honour them and benefit the people through my work.

STUDY DESIGN

An eclectic design evolved as the most appropriate approach to this particular research and careful consideration had to be given to the methodologies and methods that would most appropriately serve the intentions of the project and honour the participants. An interpretive inquiry was selected as the most appropriate method for engaging in a study of Indigenous research methodology. The inductive approach to the research that seeks to glean findings from the research rather than starting with hypotheses about this issue was, I believe, appropriate. The study was guided by an ethnographic approach to the data collection, which emphasizes a focus on subjective experience of participants, and seeks to understand their perspective of the world (Maxwell, 1998). This method seemed particularly relevant for Indigenous scholars whose subjective experiences in their research endeavours are not widely known My intention to integrate my nascent understanding of indigenous practices and protocols in the research design demanded parameters that were flexible to methodological or method changes during the project, hence the opportunity to draw upon methodologies and methods that fit best was taken. The flexibility afforded by an eclectic design was the primary consideration for research design in terms of worldview application.

An important example is the necessary option to include ceremony at random. At several stages in the project, I experienced frustration at a perceived lack of progress. I engaged in ceremonial activity for guidance as a last minute inclusion to my methodology. This approach is not alluded to in

any western models, and the parameters of some approaches may preclude the flexibility desired in Indigenous research. Grounded theory, for example, is not considered "pure" unless very specific design, data collection, and data analysis techniques and procedures are used (Glaser, 1992).

DATA COLLECTION

The data collection phase presented the considerations of where and when to incorporate ceremony and protocol, and how to deal with the fact that the interview guide approach was, in this project, quite inappropriate.

Ceremony and Prayer

The data collection phase of the research project was initiated with a small tobacco offering ceremony and prayer. I placed an offering of tobacco at the base of a tree and requested spiritual guidance and the support of the ancestors in my research of this particular issue. Although some logistical activities associated with the research project had occurred at the time of the offering, this ceremony represented the actual start of the project.

Protocol

Adhering to *Nehiyaw* protocol, interviewees were presented with an offering of tobacco at the start of the interview and a small gift of appreciation at the end of the interview. The tobacco offering "...reinforces the ethic of reciprocity in a cosmological understanding of interdependence, balance, and harmony" (Michell, 1999). The offering symbolizes gratitude and respect as one enters into an interaction with another. It also represents accountability and commitment on the part of the giver as well as the receiver. The simple act of offering tobacco is multidimensional and complex[3]. Gifts, too, are highly significant in indigenous culture and symbolize the philosophy of interconnectedness through generosity and the sharing of material wealth[4]. For participants who live at a distance, these exchanges took place by mail.

Interviews

In the design of the project, topical interviews, which seek specific "explanation of events and descriptions of processes" through exploring "detailed factual information", were selected as the most appropriate way to get the specific information about how Indigenous scholars approach their particular research methodologies (Rubin and Rubin, 1995, p. 29). The interviews were taped and transcribed, and notes were taken during the interviews to highlight important points. A semi-structured interview guide was used.

I quickly discovered that the interview guide did not work. Participants were very much storytellers and narrated their experiences and events. Honouring traditional teachings of listening respectfully, I did not interrupt or ask another question until the narration was complete. This had significant implications for time management, and the need to end one of the interviews that extended far beyond the two-hour estimate was extremely hard to do. I struggled with feeling disrespectful for doing so. Further, because many of the stories were extensive, several of the interview guide questions were covered in one response. The advantage of the storytelling mode of narrative is that a wealth of information arose out of this form and provided a broad picture of the participants' experiences, and a broad picture of their knowledge of the subject areas. One participant described how Indigenous people live "storied lives" (Anonymous). This was abundantly clear in the course of the project.

To honour that form of narrative, the interview guide was scrapped. I reevaluated the questions and concluded that two questions could be used as mental guideline in subsequent interviews: 1. What is the difference between western research and Indigenous research? And, 2. How do you incorporate your worldview protocol into the research you do? These questions also resulted in many stories, and I asked questions based on these two 'grand themes' in various ways.

In future research, I will be prepared for storytelling as the form of narrative, and may use one or two 'grand theme' questions as the guide for data gathering.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis chosen for the project combined thematic analysis and Kirby and McKenna's (1989) analytical schema. Inspiration cognitive mapping software was used as a tool of analysis. The selection of these approaches was due to an intuition that locating themes and categories through thematic analysis would most readily honour the concept of letting the participants' words and intentions emerge as intact as possible. The transcriptions were reviewed line by line and any significant data was underlined and summarized in point form in the margin. This information was entered into the computer with the software program and assembling the small bits of information under theme headings, and then category headings completed the thematic analysis.

The biggest challenge for me in the analysis stage was a growing awareness of the domination of my own western research training. Initially it seemed logical for me to categorize the findings under the headings common in the western research paradigm: "theory" and "methodology". However, it quickly became evident that these categories were insufficient for the information shared. The main reason was that much of the information could have been categorized under either or both headings. For example, the concept of "spiritual" in Indigenous ontology is a concept and a tool. Spirituality is a philosophical or 'theoretical' concept that has practical applications by way of ceremony, and protocol. All protocol has extensive 'theoretical' premises embedded in worldview, and yet they are easily classified under 'methodological' tools.

This dilemma presented itself repeatedly in the thematic analysis. A review of cutting-edge Indigenist research writings out of Australia led to an article by K. Martin (2001) titled, "Ways of Knowing, Ways of Being and Ways of Doing: Developing a Theoretical Framework and Methods for Indigenous Research and Indigenist Research." This gem of an article solved the dilemma. The data fit perfectly into the borrowed categories and with some adaptation, the theory/method rift evaporated. Ultimately, blending Martin's three categories into two best represented the data: 1) Ways of knowing, and 2) Ways of Being and Doing.

Ways of knowing, according to Martin (2001), are specific to Indigenous ontology and epistemology; it refers to ways knowledge is learned retained, expressed, expanded and contracted according to Indigenous contexts – for example, connection to land is one medium through which we engage in Indigenous ways of knowing. Ways of knowing occur at personal, social, political, and historical levels (Martin, 2001). Ways of knowing might be equated with "theoretical orientation" because mores, norms, and social and philosophical tenets rest within this category.

There was too much ambiguity with respect to "being" and "doing" as separate categories. For example, "behaviour expectations" under "Approach" can be viewed as an individual's way of being in the world. Then again, it can be viewed as a way to do things. Combining these two categories alleviated this conflict to a large degree. It remained that several themes are categorized under more than one category. This appears to be the nature of Indigenous research.

The themes that emerged from the information shared by the participants illustrate a blending of Indigenous theory and cultural method that Indigenous researchers have incorporated into their research endeavours.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND OTHER PROBLEMATICS

Considerations of the trustworthiness of this project led to the inclusion of several elements such as member checking to ensure accurate reflection of participant data, maintaining an audit trail for transparency, and providing thick description of each stage (McCracken, 1989). Several conflicts between Indigenous protocol and western research trustworthiness elements arose. These included issues of confidentiality, the concept of being an expert in research, and taking credit for the research work.

Confidentiality, in western academic research, is paramount and must be incorporated into the design as well as guaranteed in writing by the researcher and participants alike. However, this ultimately conflicts with several tenets of Indigenous worldview. As an Indigenous researcher, one gathers the

words, knowledge, and wisdom of others and has tremendous obligations to reflect those meanings in a respectful and accurate way (Sinclair, 2003). Acquiring knowledge as a part of nature falls under the ethic of reciprocity whereby one must return something to nature. We do not presume to own a part of nature. Honouring the ethic of reciprocity, therefore, is done through tobacco offerings and gift-giving. Because knowledge is part of nature, as researchers we become caretakers of the words and knowledge carried by others (Sinclair, 2003); taking credit alone for such work is profane. In this regard, western academic confidentiality rules and regulations stand in direct contravention of crucial Indigenous worldview tenets.

Similarly, a primary tenet of Indigenous approach to knowledge is the concept that we are all students. Even the wisest Elder will recount that they know little; they too, are students. Hence, the concept of a research 'expert' is anathema to Indigenous knowledge and translates into very specific ways of being and attitudes in approaching research. This tenet, in particular, demands a sense of humility in the researcher, which translates into seeking ways and means of honouring the fact that the knowledge arising out the research does not belong to the researcher. The knowledge comes through the participants, who ought to be named if they consent to it. In this project, an amendment to the standard consent form was made whereby the participants consented, in writing, to being identified and cited in written reports.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Although this paper is about the challenges encountered in the process of engaging in research about Indigenous research methodology and method, the preliminary findings are significant and merit a brief discussion, particularly because they allude to a promising future for Indigenous research.

According to the data, Indigenous research is premised on natural law, which encompasses a range of codes of conducts, canons of behaviours. The premise of natural law as underpinning research, indeed all knowledge, highlights concomitant values, beliefs, practices, protocols, behaviour, and responsibilities to self, family, and community. The protocols and behaviours also serve as research methods. Martin (2001)

articulates that they serve as a way of "framing and structuring how we think about those ideas and practices" (citing Smith, 1999a). Smith (1999a) describes these principles in her aboriginal language as "Tikanga Maori." These, she explains, are customary practices, obligations, and behaviours or principles that govern social practices" (p.10). In terms of research, the canons and doctrines of natural law create significant responsibilities and considerations for which the researcher must account, and to which the researcher is accountable. These responsibilities span spiritual, cultural, and practical realms.

As aboriginal scholars we have a tremendous responsibility that goes way beyond that which is expected of mainstream because we are mediators, we are interpreters, we are translators, we are advocates. We play far more roles in terms of our scholarship than the mainstream (WW).

The commitment to community as a theme emerges consistently. Commitment to community is "a long-term investment" because "relationships do not end just because a research project ends" (WW). In separate studies, Hanson and Hampton (2000) and van Uchelen, Davidson, Quresset, Brasfield, and Demerais (1997), as cited in Hanson and Hampton (2000), discovered themes that parallel to this study, albeit in different contexts. They found that "the cultural traditions of Native peoples hold within them the spirit of community" and that "aspects of community are strength in native cultures and are present in relationships, dialogues, and community gathering" (Hanson and Hampton, 2000, 138).

The research suggests that Indigenous ontology and epistemology readily provide frameworks for research theory, methodology, and methods. They direct the researcher to the proper means for initiating and implementing research, as well as to the purpose of research. In the contemporary Indigenous context, this means adhering to ceremony and protocol, and taking into account social and historical realities facing indigenous people (Sinclair, 2003). Research has historically drawn "...upon frameworks, processes and practices of colonial, western worldviews and the inherent knowledges, methods, morals and beliefs" (Martin, 2001, p.2). To challenge research hegemony resembles understanding colonial history, and ensuring that research has practical applications that empower and liberate the people through practical and ameliorative

results (Sinclair, 2003). We see this dynamic unfolding in other Indigenous realms:

The emerging model of Aboriginal social work practice can be distinguished from conventional approaches because of its use of cultural teachings and practices and the integration of principles based on an understanding of colonialism and empowerment" (Morrissette, McKenzie and Morrissette, 1993:101).

Like critical theorists, Indigenous scholars understand that the "epistemological is the political" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2001, 1062). Indigenous research is one way of redressing debilitating social consequences of colonialism.

> ...research can be so significant...but we have to make sure that we're doing these things in the right way and involving communities right from the planning stages to the implementation to the delivery to the evaluation parts of a research project. ...It's about improving the quality of life in the communities (Anonymous).

Research from an indigenous perspective thus "is undeniably political, emancipatory and confirming in its aim to control research on aboriginal lands and regarding aboriginal people" (Martin, 2001, p.2). Implementing Indigenous research presents methodological challenges for the researcher, confirmed by the process of this project. However, all the participants found creative ways to incorporate their worldview beliefs, protocols, and practices into their research endeavours despite the challenges.

THE BIG SECRET

Perhaps the most significant finding that is emerging out of this research project is that Indigenous researchers have been "operationalizing worldview" all along. Much like the resistance to the outlawing of cultural practices in this country at the turn of the century that manifested in the continued, albeit underground, ceremonial activities, Indigenous researchers have, despite the restrictions of the western research paradigm, creatively applied and integrated cultural practices

and protocols into their work. Every participant in this study spoke of attending to spirit through dreams, prayer and ceremony, conducting ceremony before, during and after projects, and engaging in appropriate protocol throughout their projects. Significantly, all of the participants recounted *not* sharing this information with their research supervisors, research committees, or funding agencies.

> My great great Grandfather's answers formed the foundation of that thesis that reads like any old academic prose with tons of footnotes related to the archives. Nobody would know, and I didn't, I don't know if I've ever told that [story] in print. I don't think so. But I have told people the story about how do you footnote a dream, huh? And one day I will write about it when I'm old enough, I'm grey-haired and not too many people will argue with me, you know.
>
> I think there's the challenge of dealing with academia and funding sources and things like that that don't value this way of doing things. And so I end up telling them half the story because they're not going to understand the full story or why I'm doing what I'm doing.
>
> I couldn't share the spiritual aspect of it because they wouldn't understand. I've talked to other practicum or Master's students who are doing their studies and some first nation individuals who told me, oh I took this idea to my supervisor and I just didn't have any support.

For one participant who did share protocol information, the result was disastrous.

> I wanted to do it in a way that was culturally sensitive and appropriate and to use the protocol of offering tobacco to my research participants. And so I had submitted my ethics proposal and it was rejected right off the bat because first of all they didn't sanction the use of tobacco in research.

Another participant described the refusal to honour Indigenous ways of approaching research as disrespectful and mean; an insult of the highest level. The epistemic violence of not honouring other ways of viewing the world and other ways of being in the world has resulted in the secrecy revealed by this project. One of the participants, rightfully the "Elder" (based on experience and age) among the participants, responded with the most significant recommendation to emerge from this project. She indicated that for Indigenous researchers it is time to take a stand:

> I would just say to them, this is who I am. This is who I want and this is how it has to be, and you have to honour that. And if they're real, I guess they will honour it. And if they're not and they hide behind academia as a way to legitimize their ignorance they won't honour it. That's how I look, that's how I see that, and that's how I deal with it.

CONCLUSION

Little of the information presented here is new to Indigenous scholars. Indigenous people are generally familiar with ontological and epistemological tenets because this knowledge is transmitted through Indigenous socialization, and spiritual teachings in spite of the forces colonization and western cultural hegemony. This information is being brought together in relation to academic research to provide an example of how one indigenous scholar approached a western research project with the intention of honouring her worldview and cultural protocols and practices, and recounting how these applications unfolded.

It is important to recognize that cultural traditions and protocol are not static or fixed. They vary depending upon the teacher, teachings, nations, traditions, and other contexts. How the individual applies worldview to their work is an individual dynamic. One participant stated, " We draw upon collective knowledge, but each person's manifestation of that knowledge may look completely different" (WW). Table 1 shows how the investigator integrated western research requirements with Indigenous ontology in this study. How another researcher chooses to incorporate these points into their research and

report will depend on their location and their unique way of blending their ways of knowing, being, and doing with paradigms and methods that best meet the needs of their project. Table 1 is merely one way.

TABLE 1: Blending the Criteria of Two Paradigms

Preparation
Ceremony, offering, prayer

Literature Review
Including oral history, and teachings, indigenous writers.

Location
Identification of Self, history, experiences and relations – this provides the context of the researcher.

Theoretical Orientation
Indigenous theoretical, methodological and logistic considerations that account for worldview, beliefs, traditions, protocols and practices.

Study Design
Indigenous practices and protocols – how, why and when these will be or were incorporated (Western methodologies).

Data Collection
Indigenous practices and protocols protocols – how, why and when these will be or were incorporated (Western methodologies).

Data Analysis
Indigenous practices and protocols – how, why and when these will be or were incorporated (Western methodologies).

Acknowlegement
Serves as a way of honouring particpants and a reminder of the purpose and significance of the research to the community.

The challenges of applying worldview in research are several and are best dealt with by giving primacy to the tenets of Indigenous worldview. Stated simply, if the methodology or

method violates tenets of Indigenous worldview or contravenes traditional teachings, then the methodology or method must and can be adapted. "Taking a stand" demands that Indigenous researchers and scholars make choices congruent with an Indigenist stance whereby the rights of Indigenous people and the traditions of Indigenous people come first in research endeavours. The challenges of incorporating Indigenous practices and protocols in all stages of the research from design, to data collection and analysis, to consideration of trustworthiness exist but are not insurmountable. They merely require creativity, flexibility, and a willingness to seek out the ways and means of meeting the disparate demands of two paradigms: Indigenous worldview, and western academic standards.

REFERENCES

Barden, J. and Boyer, P. (1993). Ways of Knowing: Extending the boundaries of scholarship. *Tribal College, Vol. IV*(3), Winter. 12-16.

Churchill, W. (1996). *From a Native son: Selected essays on Indigenism, 1985-1995*. Boston: South End Press.

Colorado, P. (1988). *Bridging Western and Native Science. Convergence* XXI(2/3). 49-68

Deloria, Jr., V. (1991). Commentary: Research, Redskins, and Reality. *American Indian Quarterly, 15*(4), 457-68.

Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (Eds.). (2000). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Gilchrist, L. (1997). Aboriginal communities and social science research: Voyeurism in transition. *Native Social Work Journal, 1*(1). 69-85.

Glaser, B. (1992). *Basics of grounded theory analysis: Emergence vs. forcing*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Graveline, F. (2000). The circle as methodology: enacting an aboriginal paradigm. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, Vol. 13*(4). 261-370.

Hanson, I. and Hampton, M. (2000). Being Indian: Strength sustaining First Nations people in Saskatchewan Residential schools. *Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health, Vol. 19*(1). 127-142.

Henderson, R., Simmons, D., Bourke, L. and Muir, J. (2002). Development of guidelines for non- Indigenous people undertaking research among the Indigenous population of north-east Victoria. *The Medial Journal of Australia, 176*(10). 482-485.

ICPB - Indigenous Peoples Council on Biocolonialism. Indigenous Research Protection Act.Retrieved September, 2002 from:
http://www.ipcb.org/publications/sub_htmls/irpaintro.htm

Kirby, S. and McKenna, K. (1989). *Experience, Research, and Social Change: Methods from the margins*. Toronto: Garamond Press.

Kowalski, L., Thurston, W., Verhoef, M, and Rutherford, G. (1996). Guidelines for entry into an Aboriginal community. *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies XVI*, 2. 267-282.

Martin, K. (2001). Ways of knowing, ways of being, and ways of doing: developing a theoretical framework and methods for Indigenous research and Indigenist research. Retrieved August 23, 2002 from http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/rsrch/conf2001/PAPERS/MARTIN.pdf

Maynard, E. (1974). The growing negative image of the anthropologist among American Indians. *Human Organization, Vol 33*(4). Winter.

McCracken, G.D. (1988). *The Long Interview*. Newbury Park, Sage Publications.

Maxwell, J.A. (1998). Qualitative Research Design. Bickman, L. and D.J. Rog. (1998). (Eds.) *Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods*. Thousands Oaks: Sage Publications.

Michell, H. (1999). Pakitinasowin: Tobacco offerings in exchange for stories and the ethic of reciprocity in First Nations research. Retrieved April 20, 2002 from http://www.sifc.edu/Indian%20Studies/IndigenousThought/fall99/tobacco.htm

Morrisette, V., McKenzie, B., and Morrissette, L. (1993). Towards an aboriginal model of social work practice: Cultural knowledge and traditional practices. *Canadian Social Work Review, Vol. 10*(1). 91-108.

Nabigon, H., Hagey, R., Webster, S., and MacKay, R. (1999). The learning circle as a research method: The Trickster and Windigo in research. *Native Social Work Journal, Vol. 2*(1). 113-137.

Peacock, T. (1996). Issues in American Indian research: The perspective of a reservation Indian. Paper presented to the American Indian Research Symposium, Orcas Island, July 1996.

Retrieved December 20, 1998 from http://niikaan.fld.cc.mn.us/tcj/summer97/PEACOCK.html

Poupart, J., Martinez, C., Red Horse, J., and Scharnberg, D. (2000). *To build a bridge: An introduction to working with American Indian communities*. 2nd printing. St. Paul, MN: American Indian Policy Centre.

Red Horse, J. (1993). The utility of scholarship: An interview with John Red Horse. *Tribal College, Vol. IV* (3). 18-20.

Rubin, H. and Rubin, I. (1995). *Qualitative Interviewing: The art of hearing data.* Thousand Oaks: Sage publications.

Sinclair, R. (2003). Indigenous Research Applications in Social Work. Unpublished paper. University of Calgary, Faculty of Social Work.

Smith, L. (1999a). Kaupapa Maori Methodology: Our power to define ourselves. A seminar presentation to the School of Education, University of British Columbia, 1999. Retrieved June 23, 2002 from:

www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/iri/pdf/Kaupapa%20Maori%20Methodology.pdf

Smith, L. Tuhiwai (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Stoller, P. and Olkes, C. (1987). *In sorcery's shadow: A memoir of an apprenticeship among the Songhay of Niger*. Chicago: University Press.

Sue, D. and Sue, D. (1990). *Counselling the culturally different: theory and practice.* NY: J. Wiley and Sons.

Swisher, K. (1993). From passive to active: Research in Indian country. *Tribal College, Vol. IV*(3), Winter. 4-5.

Trimble, J. (1977). The sojourner in the American Indian community: Methodological issues and concerns. *Journal of Social Issues, 33*(4). 159-174.

Trimble, J. and Medicine, B. (1976). Development of theoretical models and levels of interpretation I mental health. J. Westermeyer. (Ed.). *Anthropology and Mental Health*. Netherlands: Mouton. University of Victoria (2001). Protocols and principles for conducting research in an Indigenous context. University of Victoria: Faculty of Human and Social Development. Retrieved June2, 2002 from: http://web.uvic.ca/igov/programs/masters/igov_598/protocol.pdf

van Uchelen, C., Davidson, S., Quresset, S., Brasfield, C., and Demerais, L. (1997). What makes us strong: Urban aboriginal perspectives of wellness and strength. *Canadian Journal of Mental Health, 16*(2). 37-50.

Wax, M. (1991). The ethics of research in American Indian communities. *American Indian Quarterly, 25*(4). 431-455.

Acknowledgement

Indigenous research implies a sacred trust to the participants that derives from one of the primary tenets of my Nehiyaw worldview – to honour interconnectedness, responsibility, and respect. It is my sacred responsibility to collect their words, act as the guardian of the spirit of those words, and to transmit them as accurately, sensitively, and respectfully as possible. Ultimately, this honours all our relations and the ancestors from whom the knowledge originated.

In engaging in Indigenous research, I become a caretaker of words, a purveyor of sacred knowledge, and a conduit for the greater wisdom of others. As I work towards the final report of this project, I remember that the sacred knowledge has emerged from others. Any errors and omissions entirely are mine. To those participants who consented to be identified: Dr. Hilary Weaver, Dr. Lauri Gilchrist, Yvonne Howse, Calvin Redman, and Dr. Winona Wheeler; and to those who remain anonymous:

Kinan•skomitin
Kahkiy•w Niw•hkom•k•n•k

SPECIAL EDITION

NATIVE SOCIAL WORK JOURNAL

Articulating Aboriginal Paradigms: Implications for Aboriginal Social Work Practice

The Native Social Work Journal is a member of the Canadian Association of Learned Societies

EDITOR (Special Edition)
Roger Spielmann, Ph.D.

Volume 5, November, 2003

© Native Social Work Journal

Published by the Native Social Work Journal
Laurentian University
Sudbury, Ontario
www.laurentian.ca/www/nhs

Printed by the Laurentian University Press
Laurentian University
Sudbury, Ontario

Cover Artwork by Leland Bell

Journal Layout by Roger Spielmann

ISSN 1206-5323
All rights reserved

NISHNAABE KINOOMAADWIN NAAMAADWIN